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PROJECT
EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP :
FROM POLICY TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE THROUGH QUALITY ASSURANCE
(EDC-QA PROJECT)

SEMINAR
ON QUALITY ASSURANCE OF EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP
(EDC-QA) IN SCHOOLS

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REPORT

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the international seminar on “Quality Assurance of Education for Democratic Citizenship in Schools” that took place in Brdo/Kranj, Slovenia from 27th to 29th of January 2005. The seminar was organised jointly by the Centre for Educational Policy Studies in Ljubljana (CEPS) and UNESCO, with a financial contribution from the Council of Europe.

The seminar concluded the first phase of the project *“Education for Democratic Citizenship: from policies through effective practices through quality assurance in Southeast Europe”* (EDC-QA project) initiated under the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, coordinated by CEPS, endorsed by UNESCO and funded by Norway, UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) has been in the focus of the Council of Europe since 1997. The project run by the Council of Europe from 1997 to 2000 brought essential conceptual clarification and promoted EDC widely at European and international level. The Enhanced Graz Process, the Education and Youth Task Force of the Stability Pact for SEE, also acknowledged the importance of EDC for the countries of Southeast Europe by initiating a working group on EDC and the management of diversity. The EDC-QA project was initiated in this framework, based on the results of a Stocktaking research that revealed a gap between policies and practices of EDC in SEE and the need for adapted instruments to ensure support for policy implementation and for quality improvement in EDC activities.

The experience of some Western European countries in the use of quality assurance approaches in education and the relevance of these approaches both to the current needs of the education systems in SEE and to the basic principles of EDC recommends quality assurance as a valuable and powerful tool for driving real improvement in the practices of EDC in SEE.

This report aims at reflecting the presentations and discussions of the seminar and at analysing some of the key issues associated to the development and use of specific quality assurance tools for EDC in SEE countries, as a step towards sustainable QA systems for EDC and for education in general in the countries of the region.

II. PROCEEDINGS OVERVIEW

The seminar was organised at the end of the first phase of the EDC-QA project which has been devoted to

- collecting information about EDC-QA in Southeast Europe
- collecting information about EDC-QA in Europe and internationally
- producing a Tool for quality assurance of EDC in schools.

The seminar’s objectives were therefore to

- present and discuss concepts and practices of quality assurance in education and EDC,
- present and discuss the EDC-QA Tool as well as other products resulting from the project,
- draw conclusions for the future development of EDC-QA in Southeast Europe,
- lay the foundations for regional and national strategies of EDC-QA

The forty participants were:

- authors of the EDC-QA Tool and project managers
- representatives of international organisations (UNESCO, Council of Europe, GTZ)
- Council of Europe EDC coordinators
- Ministry of Education representatives from the countries of SEE
- School Inspectors
- Teachers and Head Teachers
- Educational scientists
- Experts
- NGO representatives

This composition shows the need to involve multiple stakeholders in the process of improving the quality of EDC.

The programme of the seminar was structured in the following sequences:

- Opening of the seminar, by Myriam Karela, UNESCO
- Presentation of the EDC-QA project, by Michela Cecchini, project manager
- Presentation of the EDC-QA Tool, by Janez Krek, CEPS
- Reflections from the Slovenian experience, by Slavko Gaber
- Conceptual clarifications: EDC. Current developments in EDC at the Council of Europe, by Angela Garabagiu, Council of Europe
- Conceptual clarifications: Quality assurance, by Janez Krek, CEPS
- Conceptual clarifications: EDC-QA, by Michela Cecchini, project manager
- Case studies: Romania and Slovenia, by Simona Velea, Institute for Educational Sciences, Bucharest and Janez Krek, CEPS
- EDC-QA in schools (Working Groups)
- QA in Europe and beyond, by John MacBeath, UK
- EDC-QA at education system level (Working Groups)
- Sharing and discussion of Working Groups results
- Comments by John Macbeath, UK
- Discussion on proposals for next steps
- Comments by Bruno Losito, the evaluator of the project
- Conclusions by Calin Rus, the general rapporteur

The various plenary sessions of the seminar were chaired alternatively by Myriam Karela and Michela Cecchini.

All participants were sent, prior to the seminar, the text of the draft version of the EDC-QA Tool. A few general comments can be made on the seminar's proceedings. Participants acknowledged the big volume of input (from presenters and participants) as well as the very good quality and relevance of the plenary presentations. A balanced mixture of working methods was used during the seminar: plenary presentations and discussions, case study presentations, buzz groups, working groups. The participants were actively involved in the plenary and group discussions and raised a number of challenging questions that proved to be very useful for the reflection on the perspectives of implementing the QA approach in EDC in SEE. The seminar benefited from the excellent working conditions offered by the Kokra conference centre in Brdo/Kraj, Slovenia.

Besides being an excellent learning experience for all those involved, the seminar resulted in the information of major regional stakeholders about EDC-QA and the EDC-QA Tool and was a major incentive for them to reflect on its potential to contribute to the improvement of

EDC in SEE. The discussions, based both on situating the topic in a wider European and international context and on a pragmatic analysis of the challenges characterising SEE education systems, provided important feedback and suggestions for authors and project managers and laid the ground for defining future steps at national and regional level. The seminar was also an excellent opportunity for the participants from the region to exchange experiences and to update their information of the ongoing educational reform processes in their respective countries.

The seminar programme and list of participants appear in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

III. PRESENTATION OF THE EDC-QA PROJECT

The presentation of the EDC-QA project was made by Michela Cecchini, project manager.

Strategic goal and objectives

The EDC-QA project aims at producing and piloting a specific instrument for quality assurance (QA) for education for democratic citizenship (EDC) in eight countries of Southeast Europe¹. Its ultimate objective is to develop quality assurance systems in education and for EDC in Southeast Europe.

The project's strategy is to combine a systemic approach, regional cooperation, national and local ownership. Its assumption is to ensure the effectiveness of EDC practices by strengthening the processes of governance in education and by improving quality assurance development systems through capacity building. Ultimately quality assurance particularly for EDC is to be incorporated into national educational policies. Thus the project is in line with current quality assurance debates, approaches and practices at national and international level.

The EDC-QA project was initiated within the Stability Pact (Enhanced Graz Process)². It has been endorsed by UNESCO and is financially supported by Norway, UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

The EDC-QA project's overall rationale is to respond to the policies – practice gap in EDC in Southeast Europe documented by the above mentioned Stocktaking research by building strong connections between policy and practice through sound monitoring, evaluation and effective quality assurance processes. Elsewhere in Western Europe, and in other parts of the developed world, benchmarking, evaluation and monitoring, and building integrated and powerful systems of Quality Assurance (QA) are high on the current educational agendas. This is true of both general education policies and EDC specifically. This wider context also invites the possibility of direct integration of patterns of educational policymaking and development in the countries of Southeast Europe into the wider European and international scene.

¹ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Romania, Serbia and Montenegro (as well as the province of Kosovo), Slovenia

² cf Task Force "education and youth", working group on education for democratic citizenship and management of diversity, see www.see-educoop.net

Project plan

The project is planned to take place at three levels: regional, national and school. The project design is organized into three phases of research and development, and piloting activities. It assumes that in a fourth phase, the new Tool would be introduced at system level, i.e. in all schools and other relevant institutions within participating countries.

Phase 1 : research and development – setting up of researchers’ group; stocktaking study on quality assurance in SEE; international review of quality assurance models; preparation of a EDC specific QA instrument in the form of a Tool; awareness raising on EDC-QA in SEE countries; regional seminar (exchange of experience and presentation of results);

Phase 2 : training and piloting – preparation, including the production of specific materials and organisation of regional train the trainers course on the QA instrument; organisation of national training courses; piloting the use of the EDC-QA Tool;

Phase 3 : finalisation of the EDC QA instruments - review feedback from piloting activities; preparation of regional and national QA guidelines; preparation of project report; organisation of project final international seminar.

Activities so far

The project has so far

- discussed extensively and developed an understanding, by the project partners and researchers, of quality assurance systems and their constitutive elements,
- produced national reports on quality assurance in education and for EDC in the involved countries based on a common research instrument, published by UNESCO,
- collected QA models internationally,
- received nominations by Ministries of Education for “EDC-QA focal points” within the Ministries,
- established cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI), the Education Reform Initiative – SEE (ERISEE),
- finalised a draft Tool for quality assurance of EDC in schools (EDC-QA Tool) to be published in Spring 2005 by UNESCO,
- organised a regional seminar to discuss the EDC-QA Tool, held in Kranj, Slovenia, on 27-29/30 January 2005 (the source of this report).

Current challenges

At the closing of its first phase, the project’s challenges concern

- The dissemination of existing products : the national reports, the EDC-QA Tool;
- The finalisation of products : regional analysis of national reports, the EDC-QA website;
- Raising awareness in the SEE countries, among those concerned, policy makers and practitioners;
- Development of ownership of project results in the SEE countries;
- Planning and fundraising for the implementation of activities in phase 2 of the project

From this perspective and in accordance with the objectives of the seminar, the following main questions were addressed to the participants:

- is the project on the right track?
- is the EDC-QA tool relevant and useful ?

- how does it fit in the countries' situation ?
- what can the implementation look like at regional level, in the countries?

IV. REFLECTIONS FROM THE SLOVENIAN EXPERIENCE

The keynote speech of the initial session of the seminar was made by Slavko Gaber, former Minister of Education of Slovenia. Slovenia has accumulated a significant experience in setting-up a QA system in education.

Slovenia initiated in the middle of last decade a comprehensive reform of the education system. Therefore, the issue of QA has to be considered in the context of the main trends characterising this reform, including the increased local level autonomy and the responsibility of schools in assuring the quality of their work. The new legislation in the field of education, adopted in 1996, altered in a significant way two key issues connected to the idea of QA in education: the evaluation system and the role of school inspection.

Even before these changes in legislation, the classical school inspection was considered obsolete and the new school inspection service represented a change from a process-oriented approach to a standards-oriented approach. Thus, school inspection was not expected any more to focus on all aspects concerning the quality of the work of individual schools, its role becoming limited to checking that the work of schools complies with legislation and to dealing with reported violations. Even in cases where parents claim that a specific school provides low quality education, the inspector designates an expert to enter the classroom and follow the educational process and does not perform directly such tasks.

If indeed the promotion of a standards-oriented teaching process allowed for a high level of autonomy of teachers and schools, an external evaluation system had to be built as a counterweight. Since 1995 a National Examination Centre was set-up and a national baccalaureate exam has been introduced.

This also brought-up the need for clarifying what quality in education means and for providing schools with effective tools for quality assurance. The common sense understanding of quality education can sometimes be misleading. In the Slovenian case, many considered that the education system is of good quality because Slovenians going abroad tend to be successful. Therefore, schools needed an additional element to let them know how well they are performing: internal evaluation mechanisms. For this purpose, based on the analysis of different European QA systems in the 1990s, the Ministry produced a tool for internal evaluation of schools. The tool also considers as key elements externally gathered data and aims at supporting schools, not only to identify weaknesses, but also to emphasize strengths, in order to help the school's education staff decide on what needs to be improved in their activity as well as on what needs to be maintained and supported from previous achievements. The team of the Ministry of Education that developed this tool engaged in consultation with teachers and aimed at promoted local ownership of the QA approach.

Before offering this QA tool to schools, the Ministry piloted it in 20 schools. The fact that 120 schools applied to participate in this pilot phase shows a high interest for such an approach. The pilot schools formed school evaluation teams and performed internal evaluation based on the proposed tool. The piloting process revealed also the need to consider, besides the attainment of specific curricular targets, other factors that impact on the quality of education,

such as the equipment and material conditions of the school, teachers' salaries or the school climate, reflected for instance in the degree of personal and professional satisfaction of teachers. The results of the pilot phase are not yet published but soon all Slovenian schools will be offered an adapted and improved tool for internal evaluation and quality assurance. Its use will not be compulsory but the Ministry is looking for mechanisms stimulating schools to engage in improving quality through internal evaluation. While schools are encouraged to discuss the results of their students in the national exams, these results are not published in order to avoid ranking of schools. Only statistical data are made public as a reference by the Ministry.

The aim of this process in Slovenia is to set-up a QA system in education in general. EDC cannot be ignored in this framework, nor can it be separated from the mainstream process of educational improvement.

An animated and rich discussion followed Slavko Gaber's speech. It brought-up a number of clarifications related to the Slovenian context and the evolution of its education reform as well as several key issues associated to QA. One issue concerned the definition of quality and the need to consider quality, not only from the point of view of the education system, but also from the point of view of the pupils and of all the major stakeholders of education, including teachers, parents and local communities as well as the importance of the quality of the relationships between them. Another issue regarded the way school administrative autonomy is assured. This allowed the speaker to add important information about the structure of the schools' governing boards and the way that the school head is appointed. Thus, in Slovenia, the school board consists of eleven persons: five teachers and three representatives of parents and of local authorities respectively. Current debate focus on the need to obtain an approval from the Ministry for the head of the school appointed by the school board and on ways of avoiding local level political influence on schools.

V. PRESENTATION OF THE TOOL

The EDC-QA Tool was presented to the participants by Janez Krek, one of its authors and member of CEPS, the institution coordinating the EDC-QA project.

The most important product of the first phase of the EDC-QA project is the Tool for Quality Assurance of EDC in schools (the Tool). The Tool was drafted by César Birzea, Michela Cecchini, Cameron Harrison, Janez Krek and Vedrana Spajic-Vrkas, with support from Myriam Karela.

The Tool's objective is to provide those responsible for planning and carrying out EDC in formal education with principles, instruments, methodologies and options to agree on goals, evaluate their attainment and improve the EDC performance in schools and within the educational system as a whole.

The Tool's content is organized in seven chapters and a number of appendixes. The diagram below describes its structure and the relationships between the different parts:

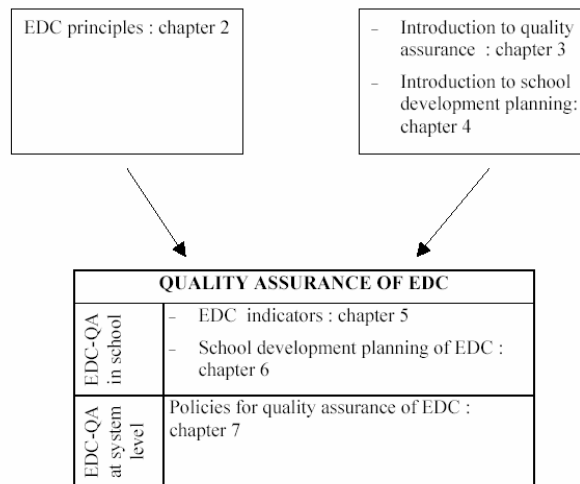
The Tool starts with a section defining EDC and outlining key characteristics and principles of EDC, with particular emphasis on the way EDC can be reflected in school life.

The next two chapters present the key concepts related to quality assurance and school development planning. Quality assurance is defined as an approach that situates the responsibility for improving educational performance at the level of the main actors at the forefront of education such as teachers, headteachers and other stakeholders at school level (students, parents, school staff, members of the school governing bodies and of the local community). A distinction is made from this perspective between quality assurance and quality control. Arguments are presented for the need to set-up coherent quality assurance systems in education and to balance school empowerment with accountability measures. School Development Planning (SDP), having self-evaluation at its core, is seen as a key process for quality assurance in education. SDP should start with a preparation stage, aiming at developing an understanding of QA and SDP in all staff, as a first step towards building a self-evaluation culture at school level. After this stage, the school staff will engage in a cycle consisting of three stages, corresponding to the self-evaluation (where we are?), the elaboration of the School Development Plan (how can we get better?) and the implementation of this plan.

The last three chapters focus on how QA approach, based on self-evaluation and SDP, can be used for improving the quality of EDC in schools. A first element is represented by a set of quality indicators of EDC, as a framework for evaluating EDC in schools. Based on a whole-school approach, this set of six indicators is structured in three thematic areas, covering (1) curriculum, teaching and learning, (2) school climate and ethos and (3) management and development. Based on this framework, the next sections of the tool present concrete instructions, tools, example and methodological recommendations on how a school can go through the stages of SDP process with reference to the EDC indicators. Finally, the last chapter is focusing on the education system level, examining the needs and implications of EDC-QA in two parallel ways: by reviewing the key components of a QA system from and EDC perspective and by examining the requirements for a specific QA system of EDC.

Therefore, the Tool is targeting both the main stakeholders of EDC at school level and policy and decision makers active in EDC at system level and in various kinds of educational authorities.

The Tool has been conceived in order to address in a useful and effective way the different situations that characterise the education systems of SEE with regards to QA. Where QA systems are in place or are in among the current priorities of educational policies in general, the Tool draws the attention of policy makers and practitioners to the importance of EDC and brings specific instruments and guidelines for integrating EDC-QA into existing QA processes. Where QA is less developed or non-existent, EDC can represent an important pilot



THE TOOL'S STRUCTURE

area for QA development. In all cases, the authors emphasize the need for adaptation of the EDC-QA Tool to each country's context.

VI. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS: EDC. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EDC AT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Angela Garabagiu, Administrator at the Division for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (DGIV) of the Council of Europe, presented the key elements of EDC, as resulted from previous work of the Council of Europe, and updated the participants on recent developments in this field within the organisation. Angela Garabagiu also expressed on this occasion the support of the Council of Europe for the EDC-QA project and for the dissemination of its products and emphasised the need to promote QA of EDC, in line with the statements adopted in November 2003 by the ministers of education of the member states of the Council of Europe.

The EDC project was formally launched in 1997, at the 2nd Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State and Government. During the first three years, concepts and definitions for EDC policies were worked out, strategies for their practical implementation defined and good practice collected. On the basis of this work, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted in October 2002 the Recommendation (2002) 12 to member states on Education for Democratic Citizenship, setting out educational objectives and contents of EDC.

The ability to engage in public life and affairs intelligently and responsibly is something that has to be learned. While a certain amount may be picked up informally in the family, the nature of life today is that this can never be sufficient to produce the kind of informed and effective citizens that modern democracies require to maintain their continued existence. Education for democratic citizenship (EDC) needs to be a feature of formal as well as informal education, and an entitlement for all citizens in a democratic society.

What is required are new forms of education that prepare learners for **actual involvement** in society – forms of education that are as much practical as theoretical, rooted in real life issues affecting learners and their communities, and taught through participation in school life as well as through the formal curriculum.

What is EDC?

Education for Democratic Citizenship is an umbrella concept, of which human rights education is the key element. Civic education, political education, values education, intercultural education, peace education as well as global education, all can be considered to contribute to the values underpinning EDC. EDC is therefore not only about transmitting knowledge about democratic rules and democratic institutions, or on individuals participation and involvement in democratic society, even if it includes this too. It is a holistic approach, in a lifelong learning perspective, that aims at enabling citizens to live together, free and responsible, in the same social and civic space.

At school level, the EDC approach adopted in the EDC-QA Tool, in line with the consensus beginning to emerge across Europe, based particularly on the work of the Council of Europe in this field, is a whole-school approach of EDC implying that :

- schools have explicit EDC policies;
- schools transmit EDC values (formative role of schools) in combination with knowledge and understanding , and skills;
- EDC is integrated in all subjects of the whole curriculum and in school life.

EDC should be a lifelong learning experience, having as a ultimate goal to prepare individuals and communities for civic and political participation. It implies respecting rights and accepting responsibilities and it values cultural and social diversity. These characteristics underline the fact that EDC is first of all a major aim of educational policies. In other words, EDC is more than a curriculum subject. It implies the infusion of EDC values, involves all stakeholders and therefore requires collaborative work within the whole school.

Where and how does EDC happen in school?

EDC is learning throughout life. School is, however, the main provider of EDC in that it:

- allows a systematic learning of citizenship-related knowledge;
- facilitates an early practice of democratic lifestyles (e.g. participation, collective negotiation, representation);
- is an institution of public interest, subject to accountability and public control;
- is a space of law where various stakeholders work and live together;
- is a self-governing and self-developing organisation.

EDC is social learning, learning in society, about society and for society. EDC skills and competencies give equal importance to knowledge, values and attitudes and the capacity for action and participation in a democratic and multicultural society. To acquire EDC skills and competencies, both knowledge-based and practice-based educational methods are called for which focus on the learner, value his/her situation and experience, foster his/her autonomy and responsibility in the learning process, in the school environment and in society.

The school context is in fact a set of learning environments and situations where EDC happens. It comprises a variety of learning situations:

- a) leadership and management** - policy regulations, inner decision-making, power distribution, governance, responsibility sharing, public accountability, self-development schemes, planning, institutional evaluation and monitoring, communication, allocation of resources, ownership and empowerment;
- b) school ethos** or the day to day activities of the school community: group activities, dominant symbols, representation of authority, school climate, informal leadership, interethnic relationships;
- c) student participation** in school boards and school councils, children parliaments, interest and pressure groups, voluntary activities, youth work, community life, students media;
- d) relationships** - peer learning, mediation and mentoring, hidden curriculum (informal and interpersonal learning), on-line communities, students-students relationships, teachers-teachers, teachers-parents, teachers-students, headmaster-teachers, school-community links;
- e) class activities** - methods and support materials, assessment and grading, teaching styles, classroom discipline, atmosphere, roles, group work, non-formal/extracurricular activities, learning outcomes.

Teachers play a crucial role in enabling students to acquire knowledge, skills attitudes and dispositions necessary for informed and active participation in a democratic society. The successful implementation EDC and human rights education depends to a large extent on the teachers, the teaching methods and the quality of the teaching. Good quality EDC emphasises teaching based on current affairs, critical thinking and skills teaching as well as knowledge transmission, co-operative and collaborative working rather than isolated preparation, professional autonomy instead of dependence on central diktat. This is why it is important to offer teachers and school leaders all the necessary support in order for them to be able to include EDC in the teaching and learning processes in schools.

The Year 2005

2005 has been declared by the Council of Europe as the *“European Year of Citizenship through Education”*. The EDC Year is expected to be a good opportunity for sharing the wealth of knowledge built up during the EDC project. Its main aim is to raise awareness among policy-makers, education professionals at different levels and teachers about EDC and increase their capacity to put this education into practice. Cooperation between EDC coordinators in member states, between coordinators and the Council of Europe, between the Council of Europe and other international organisations and NGOs will be crucial in this sense. One of the ways through which, in the framework of the EDC Year, the Council of Europe intends to support education policy-makers and education professionals in promoting EDC is the elaboration of an EDC Pack. The EDC-QA Tool is part of this Pack.

VII. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF EDC IN SCHOOLS

Janez Krek and Michela Cecchini presented the main concepts and the main elements of the process that schools can engage in by using the EDC-QA Tool. These presentations developed the content of chapters 3-4 and 5-7 of the EDC-QA Tool.

Chapters 3 and 4 of the EDC-QA Tool focus on the concept of QA and of School Development Planning, respectively, without reference to EDC.

The meaning of QA is explained by contrast with Quality Control (QC). While QC represents an attempt to impose control on a system QA approach, on the other hand says: “let’s agree what it is we should be doing. We, those in authority and with democratic responsibility, will empower you to do what your judgment tells you needs to be done. We’ll make sure the strategy is properly developed: you develop the tactics. Sure we will check up together on how well we are doing – but that monitoring program will be your responsibility too. Together, we will make the right things happen!”

A QA system has three main characteristics:

1. It sets out to make explicit – usually through an inclusive and consensual process of debate about educational goals and curriculum led by government – what “quality” actually means in terms of the performance and products of the national public school system.
2. It gives the responsibility for ensuring quality in the school system to the main actors in the system – the schools and teachers themselves. It ensures that these key actors are supported in generating and acquiring performance data about the effectiveness of their

own sphere of activity, and in developing appropriate responses to their own analysis of need.

3. It demands accountability from both teachers and schools for their performance, and ensures that the QA system is set up in such a way as to ensure that it has its own internal dynamic for achieving high standards of performance.

School development planning (SDP) has school self-evaluation at its core. A School Development Plan is an operational program which, having begun with the question, “How well are we doing?”, then sets out to answer the question, “How can we get better?” Having determined a set of answers to this latter question, it then works out how to put them into practice.

SDP, within a QA system implies recognition that the school, as a unit, is at the heart of the system and that school self-evaluation processes are also guided and driven by nationally provided instruments and informed by data generated from sources external to the school. Self-evaluation within school development planning is, per se, an accountability element.

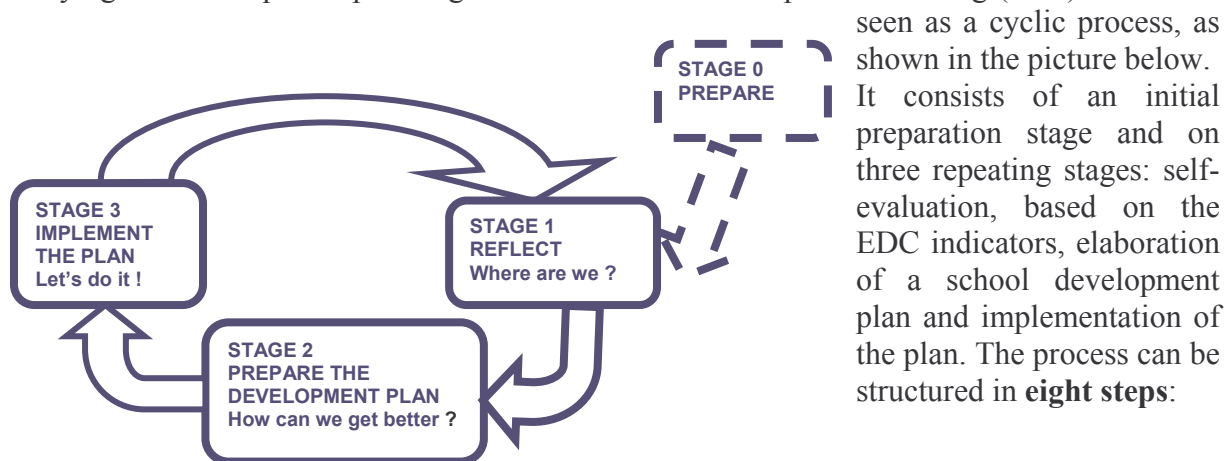
A key aspect of QA in education in general is represented by use of indicators for school self-evaluation, as part of a process of school development planning. When it comes to QA of EDC in schools, a specific set of quality indicators is therefore needed.

Chapter 5 of the EDC-QA Tool presents a framework to evaluate EDC at school level based on a set of quality indicators organised in three main areas:

- Curriculum, teaching and learning;
- School climate and ethos;
- Management and development.

This approach is based on EDC principles, as outlined in the previous section and consistent with the whole school approach. The indicators help finding a clear answer to the question *What are we going to evaluate?*. They are descriptive, correspond to a desired quality of EDC and provide criteria for reaching a judgement and means for comparing what is with what ought to be. They are generic and should be seen as guidelines to be adapted for their use in a particular education system. The list of EDC indicators is presented in p.58 of the Tool.

Chapter 6 of the EDC-QA Tool is a toolbox aiming at assisting schools in preparing and carrying out development planning of EDC. School Development Planning (SDP) of EDC is



seen as a cyclic process, as shown in the picture below. It consists of an initial preparation stage and on three repeating stages: self-evaluation, based on the EDC indicators, elaboration of a school development plan and implementation of the plan. The process can be structured in **eight steps**:

1. develop an evaluation culture: awareness raising on usefulness and importance; acquisition of skills;
2. set up an evaluation team : headteacher, EDC teacher(s), student(s), parent(s), local community, researcher;
3. ask the right question : what information are we looking for and where will we find it? use the indicators as a reference;
4. decide on methods : use a variety of methods to collect factual, value-based and process information;
5. analyse data = identify strengths and weaknesses : use a four-point scale
6. draw conclusions : EDC achievements, EDC weaknesses, critical points needing improvement;
7. prepare, disseminate and discuss the evaluation report;
8. prepare the development strategy : priorities, who does what, timetable, training and support needs, funding, monitoring of progress.

Such a process implies significant challenges for a school willing to integrate it. Besides the complexity of the process itself, these challenges refer to developing an evaluation culture (begin small, learning by doing), evaluating EDC, and students participation in evaluation. A possible way to deal with these challenges is to take a step by step development approach, to start with achievable goals related to some of the indicators and grow from one year to another.

But measures and initiatives at school level need to find appropriate support at system level. **Chapter 7 of the EDC-QA Tool** provides an overview of the role of education policies in developing a system of QA of EDC and a set of recommendations in this respect.

An analysis of the main elements of a QA system from the perspective of EDC principles reveals some key factors of democratic educational governance. These factors concern:

- defining quality based on a participative approach that involves all stakeholders;
- transparent and information-based accountability
- non-arbitrary inspection, an inspection approach based on respect, dignity and collaboration, focusing on assistance towards improvement rather than on control.

Effective EDC policies need to be accompanied by clear guidelines for QA of EDC as support for appropriate implementation measures. Adapted and extensive training programmes targeting teachers, head teachers and inspectors are essential for the development of QA systems. Inspectors need training not only in understanding and implementing the new vision on inspection, compatible with the QA approach, but also on EDC principles and specific teaching and learning practices associated with EDC.

External data for EDC need to be available as a complement of school self evaluation on EDC. Special attention should be granted in this context to:

- results in national examinations in EDC-related subjects such as history or social studies;
- assessing and reporting students' EDC outcomes and research on EDC impact;
- monitoring EDC practices, through collection and dissemination of good practice examples and longitudinal research.

The setting-up of a system for QA of EDC implies:

- reviewing the current situation (important information is available in the country reports elaborated in the first phase of the EDC-QA project);

- setting-up or reforming structures at system level necessary for promoting QA approach in the education system
- setting-up specific elements related to EDC and to QA of EDC

VIII. CASE STUDIES: SLOVENIA AND ROMANIA

In order to illustrate the various situations of the education systems in SEE with regards to quality assurance and the opportunities and challenges of developing coherent quality assurance systems of EDC, two case studies were presented: Slovenia, by Janez Krek, from the Centre for Educational Policy Studies in Ljubljana, and Romania, by Simona Velea, from the Institute for Educational Sciences in Bucharest. They constituted important input for the analysis, in working groups, of the implications of EDC-QA at school and at system level in SEE.

1. Slovenia

As a result of the educational reforms, national educational goals and curriculum promote a cross-curricular approach (but clear evaluation standards are needed) and EDC is considered within a whole-school approach. However, this approach has not been yet fully implemented in schools and guidelines for schools are needed in this respect. Schools do not know how EDC-principles relate concretely to schools' behaviour patterns and they are not prepared to "translate" EDC principles and to make plans for the school's character-building role as a cross-curricular and a whole-school matter.

Slovenia is very advanced in terms of policies for school empowerment. Schools have a high degree of autonomy and curriculum is goals oriented, allowing teachers to organise the educational process in a flexible way. Teacher training and professional development activities are well developed and could be used for SDP in EDC. Existing accountability measures are not sufficient and mostly limited to publication of reports and award schemes. School inspection, limited to a check of legal compliance, is not an important accountability force in the system. Schools are free to decide how to achieve their goals.

Based on similar Western European experiences, a QA approach has been developed and is now in experimental phase. It includes elements of evaluating EDC-related aspects, such as school climate, violence, drugs, school identity, justice and fairness in teacher's assessment. Based on a set of areas and indicators for evaluation, the pilot schools involved in this phase organise a self-evaluation process analysing their performance by using various information sources and methods, including questionnaires and external data. All schools receive their own results from external examinations (after 3rd, 6th, 9th year of compulsory education and at the end of upper-secondary school) and can use them for comparative analysis of pupil's achievements. But these comparison offer limited possibilities for evaluating EDC.

The schools involved in the pilot projects of the Ministry have also engaged in School Development Planning, based on the results of self-evaluation but current experience is yet insufficient and constant institutional and technical support through many years would be necessary in order to ensure its effective implementation and its expansion at national level.

For this purpose, besides direct support for schools, both pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes, as well as specific training programmes for school-heads, should include knowledge and training on how to perform School Development Planning. This approach is focusing on a longer term perspective but has higher chances to make a sustainable impact.

2. Romania

For a number of years the Romanian education system has been engaged in a comprehensive reform process concerning

- Curriculum and textbooks renewal
- Assessment reform
- Reform of the management and financial system, focusing on decentralization
- VET reform
- Teacher training

The Strategy for Development of Pre-university Education in 2001-2004. Prospective planning for 2010, elaborated by the Ministry of Education and Research includes both references to the promotion of EDC and elements related to the development of a quality education system, such as:

- raising learning standards,
- improving teacher training,
- reducing the number of school drop-outs and illiteracy level,
- developing adult education and continuous vocational training,
- improving external efficiency (cost-benefits equilibrium);
- stakeholders and clients satisfaction.

Some recent developments show an interest for QA at system level. For instance, a project of Law on Quality Assurance is being prepared, a pilot program on QA in VET and a Leonardo da Vinci project produced manuals for school self-evaluation while the Ministry of Education elaborated standards and criteria for school assessment, designed a new methodology for school inspection and proposed to schools indicators for education quality. The National Curriculum and all major national education policy documents contain references directly related to the objectives of EDC. For instance, the National Curriculum states that students should be able:

- to demonstrate creative thinking, by creating models of action and decision-making in a dynamic world, developing and using critical thinking skills, using various argumentation techniques in different social contexts;
- to use various means of communication in real situations, by developing and using social communication skills;
- to understand the meaning of their belonging to different types of community, by participating in the social life of the class, the school and the local community to which they belong, identifying the rights and responsibilities they have as citizens of Romania and reflecting upon them, understanding and evaluating the interdependence between self and the others, between local and national, between national and global.

The National Curriculum includes formal provisions for EDC: civic education / civic culture is a compulsory school subject for grades III-IV and VII-VIII. Civic culture is also an optional

subject for grades V-VI and XI. The national offer for school-based curriculum includes new “types of education” that we could join under the generic concept of value-oriented education (intercultural education, global, environment, peace, health, sustainable development etc.). A National Program on EDC, initiated by the Ministry of Education offers resources and training on EDC in formal and non-formal contexts. An important number of non-formal educational activities are being implemented with the contribution of NGOs.

Several national commissions set-up by the Ministry of Education deal with various aspects concerning the quality of curriculum and of the textbooks. Based on a set of quality indicators for curriculum, for students’ assessment, school climate, teaching and learning practices etc., the Ministry is monitoring the quality of education by obtaining feedback information from different sources (external evaluation, school inspection, evaluation forms/questionnaires etc.).

Several important documents mention the need for the education process to focus on students and to take into account their motivation (interests and needs), expectations, experiences, progress of learning and satisfaction. The introduction of the Lifelong learning portfolio, a tool for recognition of non-formal education and youth participation in civil society, could stimulate the participation of young people in such activities. Also, several measures contribute to the promotion of a democratic school environment and encourage active participation of young people. Thus, two representatives of pupils are members in the School Board (for secondary and post-secondary levels) and every school has a Students’ Council. Parents and students also have a say in the choice of school-based curriculum. However, despite these positive trends, research data (IEA civic education survey, national research and opinion pools) shows the need for improving the quality of EDC in schools.

Besides the general difficulties related to the specificity of EDC (e.g. assessment of attitudes, civic competencies etc) the Romanian education system still faces a number of challenges and difficulties in practice. These concern mainly the lack of appropriate methodological skills in teaching practice, the maintenance of a knowledge-oriented approach and the need of training for teachers, school principals and inspectors.

IX. QA IN EUROPE AND BEYOND

An overview of current European and international debates on QA was presented by John MacBeath, UK. John MacBeath has been working for many years in promoting school self-evaluation and QA and is the author of several key publications on this matter. The presentation was organised around three basic questions: (1) what are the recent and current developments in the use of school self-evaluation and QA approach around the world?, (2) why self-evaluation? and (3) how can we make it work?

Understanding quality assurance and self-evaluation

Based on his long experience in the UK and his involvement in various partnerships and contacts in several European countries and in other parts of the world, John MacBeath presented evidence for the development of a global movement towards the promotion of school self-evaluation and QA in education systems. This is the result of both governmental policies aiming at improving quality of education and bottom-up initiatives from local

schools. Thus, he defines QA and school self-evaluation as the “**accountability – improvement interface**” between government intervention and local school management

Three types of logic converge to recognise the validity and opportunity of promoting school self-evaluation:

- an improvement logic (self-evaluation supports real improvement of the quality of the activities in school)
- an accountability logic (the existence of self-evaluation is by itself an accountability mechanism) and
- an economic logic (self-evaluation is less costly and more effective than external evaluation made by a team of inspectors)

School self-evaluation and development processes should be at the centre of quality assurance. They need to be part of a full-fledged quality assurance system in which the national education authorities create the conditions and provide the support for performance improvement by schools.

Self-evaluation, inspection, measurement

In the context of recent external standardised performance evaluation approaches (e.g. PISA) the question concerning the need for external inspection as a condition of quality education appears as very important. In fact, there is no evidence of a causal relationship between external inspection and educational performance. On the contrary, where teachers own assessment and evaluation, standards go up.

Besides, when looking at standardised assessment, one should keep in mind the limits of this approach and the risks associated to over appreciating its relevance:

- Tests measure what tests test
- We must learn to measure what we value rather than valuing what we measure

Or, quoting Einstein:”not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted, counts”.

An enquiry made among teachers from different European countries involved in using and promoting self-evaluation reveals a variety of motivations for this approach. For instance:

- in England, emphasis is put on the fact that self-evaluation helps raising attainment and provides tools for effective performance evaluation;
- in Norway, teachers emphasise the opportunity for sharing ideas and give equal importance to capacity building, effect on raising standards, the evidence provided for inspection and to the practical tools associated with the self-evaluation process;

Giving responsibility to teachers for ensuring quality will also stimulate them to critically reflect on the role of the school, on its relation with the local community and with the wider society and on the quality that they need to instil in their students so that they become at their turn reflective and responsible citizens. A comparison of inspection and self-evaluation reveals their differences but also the advantages of the latter:

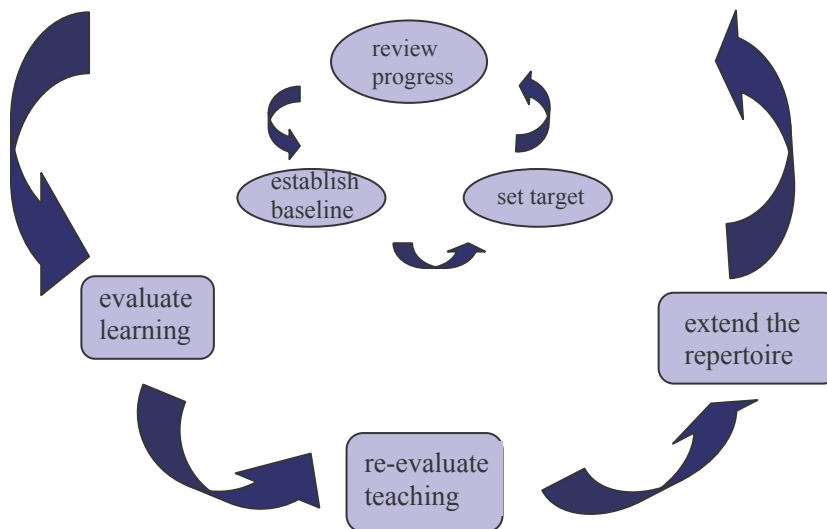
INSPECTION	SELF EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • top down • is a one-off event • provides a snapshot at a given time • is time-consuming • is more about accountability than improvement • applies a rigid framework • uses a set of predetermined criteria • creates resistance • can detract from learning and teaching • encourages playing safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bottom up • is continuous and embedded in teachers' work is a moving and evolving picture • is time saving • is more about improvement than accountability • is flexible and spontaneous • uses, adapts and creates relevant criteria • engages and involves people • improves learning and teaching • takes risks

The self-evaluation process

The process of self-evaluation is a cyclic process developed around three main phases:

- establish baseline
- set target
- review progress

But, besides this single, indeed essential, loop, a double loop should be considered. It indicates that self-evaluation provides an opportunity for reflecting on the teaching process, thus fostering new insights and a capacity-building process.



Critical features of a self-evaluation process are that

- measurement should be done over time,
- patterns of change should be considered,
- the inter-relationship of factors should be considered.

John MacBeath proposes seven golden rules of self-evaluation. Thus, self-evaluation is:

1. more a process than an event
2. more owned than imposed

3. more inclusive than exclusive
4. more importance than measurability
5. more built in than bolt on
6. more conditional than definitive
7. more formative than summative.

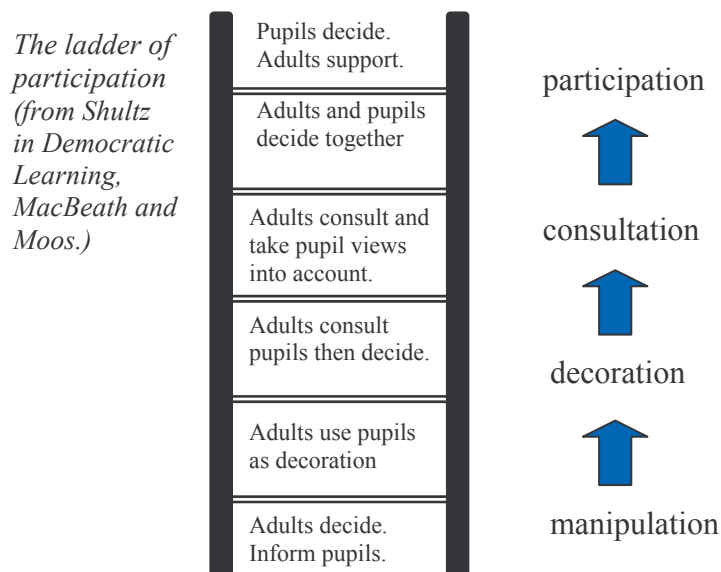
The European project which tested self-evaluation in 101 schools revealed important issues to be borne in mind when planning and implementing a self-evaluation process. They can be relevant for the context of South-eastern Europe as well:

- The central involvement of key stakeholders (teachers, pupils and parents) in the process;
- The identification of what matters most to teachers and school leaders in evaluating school quality and effectiveness;
- The support and challenge of critical friends chosen by (or in consultation with) the schools;
- The dialogue which resulted from the differing viewpoints and the need for supporting evidence;
- The repertoire of evaluation tools to be used by teachers;
- The simplicity and accessibility of the evaluation framework;
- The focus on evaluation as learning and support for teaching.

The school should be seen as an open forum of equal voices of all stakeholders and the self-evaluation process should provide opportunities for all these voices to be heard. Indeed, valuable knowledge to be taken into account lies in a variety of stakeholders, including inspectorate and local authority, external agencies, school leadership team, pupils, parents and, of course, teachers. Teachers engaging in such a process should ask themselves basic questions such as: Who tells your story? To whom? For what purpose? In what medium? How many stories are there?

Students participation

Teachers sometimes attach a lot of importance to external information and tend to forget the treasure lying in their classrooms: the opinions of their students. As shown in the diagram below, various levels of student participation can be found in schools. Teachers and school as



an organisation have definitely to gain by promoting higher levels of student participation.

On the contrary, the classical external inspection has often negative effects, not only on the atmosphere in the school affected by stress, but also on students' achievement. Thus, during inspection, teachers tend to change their attitude towards students, special lessons are organised, having as consequence a drop in student motivation, more attention is given to the look of the school

by making it more polished and suitable for visitors at anytime of day, while trouble is well hidden (for instance by sending ‘trouble students’ away on alternative programmes). Opinions of students during inspection, collected in a study by Dannawy, illustrate very well these tendencies:

“teachers are too busy being stressed....

“...some of them have no time to teach they are so busy ‘getting ready’”

“We might as well have been all robots programmed like they [the teachers and the Head] wanted us to behave and act...”

“...everyone is telling us what to say and how to act. What’s this, a dictatorship? Are we expecting Stalin or Hitler next week?”

The relationship between teachers and students can correspond to one of the following stages:

- Teachers delivering the curriculum
- Teachers and pupils discussing purposes and objectives of learning
- Pupils devising indicators of achievement
- Pupils as assessors of their own and others’ work
- Pupils as determiners of learning
- Pupils as learning partners

Towards a democratic school

A democratic school implies a democratic learning process and therefore requires teachers to move towards the last stages in the above list and to integrate them into the school culture. Stimulating learning partnerships and awareness of learning outcomes and processes is therefore an essential area of building a democratic school culture.

Awareness and expression of learning resulting from the interaction with students is also important at teachers’ level. Teachers in a democratic school find it normal to speak about their learning and are open to learning from the good practice of other schools. However, research shows a significant difference between stating and supporting the importance of learning from others’ good practice and the actual accomplishment of such learning, which is not very frequent.

The promotion of democratic schools, having self-evaluation at the core of their organisational culture implies, without doubt, a complex change process. The planning of such a change could benefit from considering:

1. **The rule of the vital few:** A few exceptional people doing something different start and incubate an epidemic;
2. **The stickiness factor:** Some attribute of the epidemic allows it to endure long enough to "catch", to become contagious or "memorable";
3. **The power of context:** The physical, social and group environment must be right to allow the epidemic to then disseminate through the population.

X. WORKING GROUPS RESULTS

Three working group sessions were included in the programme of the seminar. The first one dealt with the relevance of the EDC-QA approach and of the EDC-QA Tool **at school level** in participating countries, the second one on the same question but at the level of South-east European **education systems**, while the last one focused on identifying priorities and activities for the **future**.

1. QA at school level

A consensus emerged among the participants with regards to the relevance of both the EDC-QA approach and the Tool for the schools in their countries.

A strong association was made between the basic ideas promoted by the EDC-QA approach and the fundamental role of the school. Thus, a school is in the same time a place of learning, of social interaction and of professional development. Its main mission is “to teach students to learn about themselves and about the others”. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to preparing students for becoming responsible adults within a community and not only to providing them with abstract information needed for the exams. Irrespective of the subject they teach, educators should help students understand the way in which society works and make them able to contribute to its development. Teachers should focus on stimulating students’ interest for current social issues and on motivating them to engage in changing society for the better. Participants also emphasized the importance of a shared understanding of EDC principles, based on the work done in this sense by the Council of Europe and seen from the perspective of a whole-school approach.

By using a QA approach in relation to the EDC activities, schools will become more democratic in all their aspects, while an atmosphere of trust and respect will be stimulated. Teachers will be encouraged to better cope with change and improvement and to actively participate in transforming their school. This will also result in increased self-esteem and professional satisfaction among teachers.

The EDC-QA approach and the Tool are relevant for the schools in South-east European countries because

- ✓ they offer a coherent methodology and practical recommendations that will, not only increase the quality of EDC activities, but will also determine an improvement of the school culture
- ✓ their use would determine a higher level of school accountability, not only towards the educational authorities, as it is the case now in most countries in the region, but also towards parents and local community.

The EDC-QA Tool can be used at school level for:

- ✓ better understanding of the concept of EDC and particularly for understanding EDC as an integrative principle
- ✓ raising awareness on quality in EDC and in general education practice
- ✓ developing the capacity of the school by promoting self-evaluation, curriculum and school development planning, based on a participatory and inclusive approach.

A number of supporting factors but also weaknesses specific to the schools in South-eastern Europe have been identified:

Supporting factors

- ✓ existence of teachers and principles open to change, interested in learning and continuous professional development and willing to take action
- ✓ teachers' creativity
- ✓ students potential
- ✓ existing policies, structures, programmes and experiences:
 - favourable and/or compatible policies and/or ongoing reform processes
 - existence of school boards, requirements for school managerial plans and, in some cases, positive experiences of school development planning
 - structures encouraging student participation, such as student school councils, youth/children local councils/parliaments
 - structures and policies involving parents and local authorities in relation with school
 - national and international schools networks (such as UNESCO's Associated Schools Programme) and support from NGOs

Weaknesses

- ✓ lack of information
- ✓ lack of willingness to change and develop on the part of many teachers with low motivation due mainly to a low socio-economic status
- ✓ in many cases low motivation for change is also due to the lack of consequences in case of bad performance
- ✓ lack of understanding the purpose of EDC
- ✓ teachers lacking EDC skills
- ✓ teachers used with hierarchical structure of the education system and with top-down processes
- ✓ no experience in cross curricular approach
- ✓ overloaded teachers

The use of the Tool will help building the capacity of schools to develop an organisational culture able to effectively promote communication, participation, higher inclusion and cohesion, partnerships within school and between the school and the wider community. It will also contribute to an improved school climate and will provide opportunities for building self-esteem and trust and for personal and professional development of teachers.

2. QA at education system level

The EDC-QA approach and the Tool have also been unanimously considered very relevant by the participants for the education system level. Participants underlined the fact that this approach contributes to the accomplishment of some of the most important missions of schools, related to the social dimension of education and could have a crucial role in combating all kinds of stereotyping, discrimination (racism, sexism, discrimination against disabled persons...) and exclusion.

All countries in the region are engaged in reform processes, QA and/or EDC having important places in the main policies documents of the reforms and in existing programmes. Here are some of the comments made by participants:

- *Albania*: EDC is a separate subject with standards and policies associated. Currently, QA - strategies to meet the standards are being developed and a national evaluation centre has been set-up. The main concern is related to teacher training as there are areas where 70% are unqualified;
- *Croatia*: there is little concern for QA and no support for the associated processes from authorities, including inspectors, while there was extensive training in EDC;
- *Montenegro*: QA is part of the reform process and is in a better position than EDC. There is a toolkit and indicators, descriptors, pilot program for SDP. EDC is incorporated in QA but the reform has not had significant impact on school practices and climate;
- *Romania*: recent legal provisions and new administrative structures deal with the issue of quality and there is a tendency to move from control to accountability measures, standards and support. EDC activities lack monitoring and impact evaluation;
- *Serbia*: different programmes of EDC, wide teacher training programmes (5000 teachers trained), school development activities are evolving, a systemic approach was elaborated but confusion was generated by political backlash. QA needs to be piloted and implemented.

The EDC-QA approach and the Tool are relevant, both for the countries where QA is already part of educational policies and/or priority for the reform, and for the countries where QA is not present in the educational policies. In this latter case, the promotion of QA of EDC activities could trigger the process of setting-up a wider QA system.

While the positive consequences of an introduction of the EDC-QA approach in all South-east European countries are obvious, there are significant obstacles at the level of education policies and of the management of the education system. These obstacles refer to:

- Incoherent educational policies;
- Gap between policy and practice:
 - Existing policies not (or not adequately) implemented
 - Existing innovative practices not reflected, nor supported by educational policy
- Inertia of the education system and resistance to change at its various levels;
- The continuous and sometimes radical changes brought by the educational reforms determines a feeling of working under pressure, with negative consequences for motivation, participation and quality.

Several aspects have been identified as necessary in order to establish or improve EDC-QA in South-east European countries:

- Clear definition and implementation of a new role of school inspection, focusing on providing support for school development and school self-evaluation;
- Support for accountability measures (accountability is an unresolved issue in many countries);
- Access to relevant and reliable external data is missing or insufficient in most of the countries;
- Development, test and use of appropriate evaluation instruments that could also be shared among countries of the region;
- The need to find the right pace for the reform in order to avoid both frustration generated by moving too slowly and the negative consequences of too rapid changes;

- Better understanding by the various stakeholder of education of the meaning and importance of EDC;
- Adapted training should be provided for teachers, head teachers and inspectors;
- Develop better connection between policy and practice: practice has to inform policy.

3. Next steps

Based on the agreement that the EDC-QA approach and the Tool have a high relevance and potential benefit for the improvement of EDC and of education in general in South-eastern Europe, participants were asked to reflect on what can be done and what the next steps should be. The discussions were done in two phases: in country groups and in groups by category of participants: EDC coordinators and policy makers, teachers, international organizations and NGOs.

A number of common points appear in the proposals for next steps of all the country teams participating in the seminar.

- In each country, a National Committee for the European Year of Citizenship through Education was or should be set-up in order to coordinate the activities in this framework. This committee is also requested to elaborate a national action plan and all participants agreed that the promotion of the EDC-QA approach and of the Tool should have an important position in this plan;
- The translation, adapted to the local situation, as well as the dissemination of the Tool among those concerned at national level was also considered a common priority. The translated version of the Tool should be published, if resources can be found for this purpose, and made available also on the websites of the ministries of education;
- Advocacy for the EDC-QA approach will target both educational authorities and stakeholders with a very active role, such as the NGOs;
- Where such structures exist, the Tool will be presented to the structures in charge with QA;
- All countries consider as an essential next step applying for additional resources for piloting the Tool in schools, for organising trainings for teachers, head teachers and inspectors, as well as for implementing awareness-raising activities on EDC-QA;
- Identifying additional stakeholders that might be interested in supporting this process can bring significant support at national level. This means to involve university departments, researchers and experts in education, NGOs and NGO networks, structures working in the area of non-formal education etc.

Participants agreed also that in each country the introduction of the EDC-QA approach and the use of the Tool should take into account the specific ongoing reform processes, the specific training needs of the teachers in this respect and it should rely on the cooperation of those that see its benefits (propose, not impose).

The international organisations and the NGOs active at regional level represented at the seminar agreed on the following priorities for the future:

- The EDC-QA project team
 - will take into account the suggestions made in the seminar and will prepare for publication an updated version of the Tool
 - will develop a detailed proposal for the second phase of the project

- UNESCO
 - will continue fundraising for the second phase of the project
 - will encourage the promotion of the EDC-QA, particularly among its network of associated schools
- Council of Europe
 - will ensure a wide dissemination of the EDC-QA Tool, as part of the EDC Pack and with the support of the network of national EDC coordinators
 - will organise in the framework of the EDC year a European seminar on teacher training in EDC where the EDC-QA Tool will be included
- SICI (the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates) will inform its members about the EDC-QA project and invite them to support its activities and promote its results
- CEPS, in cooperation with the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara, Romania, will prepare a proposal for a Socrates project on EDC-QA, involving partners from the eligible countries of the region.

The dissemination of the Tool will also be ensured by its presentation on the website of the EDC-QA project, as well as on other relevant websites with regional or national specialised audience, such as Dadalos website (www.dadalos.org), the EDC TOOLBOX website managed by Kulturkontakt Austria (www.intercultural.ro/edc), the website of the Romanian National EDC Network (www.intercultural.ro/roecd), coordinated by the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara and Civica Online website (www.civica-online.ro) managed by the Institute of Educational Sciences in Bucharest.

The project team will also present the current achievements of the project, in order to explore possible future cooperation, to other groups, networks and projects concerned with the issues of EDC and QA, such as the I.M.PACT project, coordinated by Kulturkontakt Austria (www.impact-see.org), the Comenius Network on Quality Assurance (www.i-probenet.net), etc., as well as to the relevant regional and international structures, such as the European Reform Initiative in South-Eastern Europe (ERI-SEE) and the structures dealing with the UN Action Plan for Human Rights Education.

XI. FINAL COMMENTS

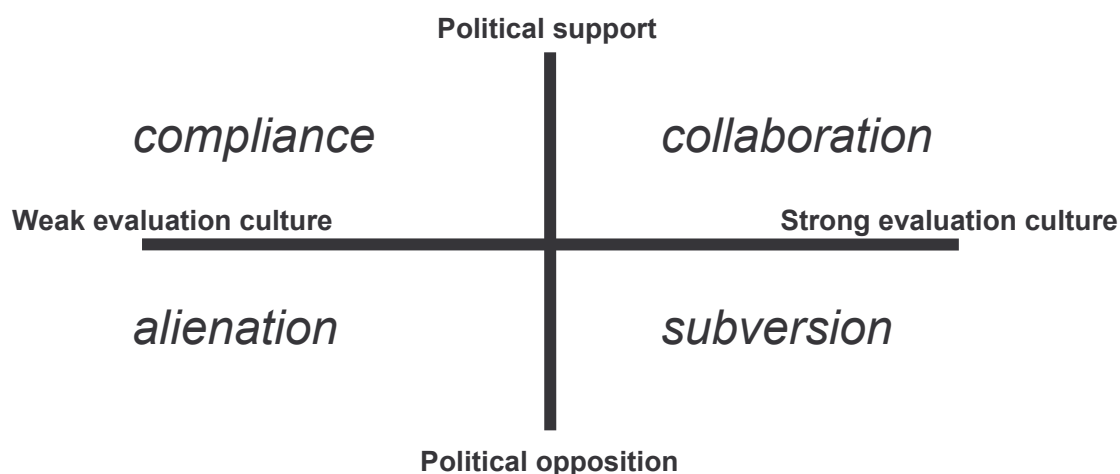
During the last session of the seminar **John MacBeath**, as international expert in the field and **Bruno Losito**, the EDC-QA project evaluator, provided participants with feedback contributions and suggestions on how to proceed further with implementing EDC-QA and with using the Tool.

John MacBeath started by emphasizing the importance of taking into account the local context and the specific culture and history when QA mechanisms and support structures are to be established. These support structures should be based on a “force field” analysis which helps to establish strengths and weaknesses of a sustainable evaluation culture and of QA articulated within coherent reforms of the education system.

This process of “cultivating” self-evaluation and QA at school and at system level should consider the negative effect of a number of “toxins” and the positive impact of certain “nutrients”. Thus the main “toxins” are: low salaries, lack of respect, pressure, workload, too much formality, fear, resistance, lack of time, lack of support, while the most important

“nutrients” could be: clarity of purpose, professional development, being valued, encouraged, trusted, respected and listened to, getting information, support and helpful feedback, acknowledging the benefits of the QA approach and developing a sense of ownership among teachers and other stakeholders.

The context is also determined by the strength of the evaluation culture and the way that self-evaluation is seen at the level of education policies, and the relationship between the two as is illustrated in the following diagram.



Of course, the desirable situation is the one characterised by collaboration but long-term efforts and commitment are needed to achieve it. An effective interconnection between policy and practice can be achieved by moving from a situation characterised by

lack of support no empowerment reluctance to do extra out of touch inspection overwhelming problems hidden curriculum over control	towards	better resources inter-agency co-operation professional development translation and adaptation coherent legislation and national policies rewarding experimentation building on good practice
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This can be achieved by focusing the energies, from a pragmatic perspective, on:

- raising political awareness
- identifying champions
- proceeding with optimism
- observing the rhythm and pace of change
- networking across learning communities

Bruno Losito focused his comments on three main achievements of the seminar:

First, the seminar allowed participants to recognize and become aware of the differences between the countries of the region at several levels:

- Differences in the culture of evaluation;
- Different ideas about school development;
- Different ideas about change in education and the role of the various agents of change

Difference in this context was perceived as an added value, allowing participants to look at the situation of their education systems and to the opportunities for improvement from different perspectives.

Secondly, the seminar led to a common understanding of the complexity of the task and of the need to integrate a top-down and bottom-up approaches.

Thirdly, the seminar allowed the participants to clarify a number of issues not so explicitly presented in the Tool and the country reports and to identify the issues that need further clarification at regional or at country level.

Finally, as project evaluator, Bruno Losito confirmed that the project is advancing in the right direction and listed the main challenges that, in his view, need to be taken into account by the participants and the project team for the next phase of the project:

- The focus should be on translating, adapting to national contexts and disseminating the Tool. That means that a right balance should be found between maintaining the key principles of the EDC-QA approach and accepting a degree of flexibility in order to better address the specific country needs.
- Developing, testing and delivering appropriate training for the various stakeholders concerned, focusing on the specific role that each category can have in implementing the EDC-QA approach at system and at school level.
- Preparing effective support measures for what is to happen after the training when the self-evaluation and school development processes will take place at school level

The project team was encouraged to coordinate efforts with country representatives in order to continue to promote a common frame for implementing the EDC-QA approach in South-eastern Europe, while also taking into account the specific environment and providing differentiated support for initiatives coming from the countries.

XII. ANALYSIS OF SOME KEY ISSUES

The ideas in this section are largely based on the discussions during the seminar but include some personal ideas of the author of this report.

The EDC-QA project is without doubt an outstanding initiative that

- Takes over the previous conceptual developments of the Council of Europe
- Builds on previous experiences and activities of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe
- Acknowledges the gap between policies and practices in EDC in the region
- Proposes practical solutions
 - with direct impact at school and at system level
 - based on active participation of all stakeholders
- Connects its products with UNESCO activities and with Council of Europe current initiatives (EDC YEAR, EDC PACK)

The EDC-QA approach, consisting in an attempt to improve the quality of EDC by proposing a set of EDC indicators and a school-based process of self-evaluation and school development planning, is in line with current tendencies at European and international level and is

compatible with approaches promoted by some of the countries that were in the frontline of school reforms in Europe.

It draws the portrait of a “Democratic School” and assumes that real schools can get closer to this portrait by engaging in a participatory school development planning, based on self-evaluation methodology. It takes a whole school approach emphasizing that EDC should be present at all levels in schools and aims for a change taking place at school level and initiated by teachers in cooperation with other stakeholders (parents, pupils, local community, NGOs) that needs to be supported by educational authorities and local community

Quality assurance is perfectly compatible with EDC, on the one hand through its core idea that the main responsibility for ensuring the quality of education lies with the main actors: teachers and the school community, and, on the other hand, by the participatory and democratic character of the evaluation and planning processes implied.

However, two important challenges are associated with this definition.

The first one refers to the conceptual identity of EDC-QA. It is extremely important to avoid the confusion of terms and clearly establish the identity of the EDC-QA approach. Indeed, one should not confuse the existing concern for quality in education with the real understanding of QA. Of course, not all measures aiming at ensuring or improving the quality of education are compatible with QA. Moreover, in some countries there are policy documents and even official structures and ministry departments concerning “quality assurance” and yet the understanding is either too general or simply different from the one proposed by the EDC-QA project.

The second one concerns the relationship between a “quality school” and a “quality democratic school”. Can a school be a “quality school” without being democratic? Is a “quality democratic school” also providing quality academic standards? For an effective implementation of the EDC-QA approach in South-eastern Europe it is essential to bring arguments, based on concrete case studies from other countries and, most importantly, from pilot schools in the region, that if a school is focusing on obtaining highest scores at all EDC indicators, this does not imply a decrease in the quality of academic achievement of its students. It should be shown that, on the contrary, in most cases, making the school comply with the EDC indicators will stimulate higher academic performance.

Self evaluation is a key element and the starting point in the process of implementing an EDC-QA approach at school level. As mentioned in the Tool, it represents in general for most schools a very challenging process. It implies:

- setting-up a self evaluation team
- clarifying rules, relationship with head teacher, authorities, decision making process in school, consequences
- planning self evaluation and doing it (it is essential to clearly distinguish planning of self-evaluation from its actual implementation) by combining external available data, facts, internal data and interests, opinions, personal views;
- using a (trained) facilitator (that can be a member of the school staff or an external person)

Self-evaluation is not only compatible with EDC principles and a process that stimulates ownership and taking responsibility, but also an efficient and effective process for gathering accurate data and help setting realistic targets. It implies a certain vision of people and their

motivation (assuming that people want to reach for quality in their work, that they want to be consulted and are ready to take responsibilities – see McGregor’s Theory X & Y in Management). Willingness to participate is an essential condition for an effective self-evaluation. Basically, self-evaluation is meant to be voluntary and cannot be ordered or forced. It relies on the willingness to take an active part in the process, even if not all those concerned involve themselves the same way and even if not all are to be equally enthusiastic about it. Showing the interest and value of self-evaluation by the initiators should help to convince stakeholders to accept entering such a process. Self-evaluation becomes a linking element between the different stakeholders and promotes partnership and cooperation.

Implementing self-evaluation in the countries of South-eastern Europe seems to be even more challenging if we take into account the cultural specificities of the region (and particularly the attributes associated with the Balkans) as well as the impact of the communist dictatorship heritage and the tradition of a strictly hierarchical, highly centralised education system. It is therefore easy to understand the reluctance and resistance that both teachers and head teachers in the region would express against a procedure so far away from their current practice and tradition. It is so unusual, many would claim, to ask teachers to admit they have weak points, by concentrating on their own domain of responsibility rather than look for a “scapegoat” or for external justifications. It is even more unusual to expect head teachers to move easily towards a shared leadership and decision making.

Another critical aspect related to self-evaluation concerns its results and its relationship with external evaluation. As the Tool mentions: “Self-evaluation produces knowledge within the school about its work and performance, which helps the school establish its position and autonomy vis-à-vis inspection, thus reducing reasons for general perceptions and fear of control” (p. 42). It is important to stress that, while accountability measures such as external evaluations are legitimate and necessary, and, while similar data and data collection instruments can be used, it will be the decision of the school team on how to relate to these data and how to interpret and present to the outside world the results in a report. This is essential to ensure conditions for an honest analysis within the self-evaluation process. There is among teachers in the region a common tendency to associate evaluation with negative aspects of the work. Many teachers are not used to celebrate success, to learn also from positive experience and to share with others their achievements. It is important to determine what to keep supporting for being positive, not only what needs to be changed and improved.

Even if less than in the case of QA, the danger of confusion persists also in the case of self-evaluation. For example, in the Romanian education system, the term “self-evaluation” is used to designate an annual questionnaire to be filled-in individually by each teacher. But, considering the procedure and the way the resulted information is used, the meaning of self-evaluation in this case is completely different from the meaning used as part of the QA approach.

It is advised that each school nominates an EDC coordinator. However, it is essential to avoid the risk that the EDC coordinator does all work or has all initiatives. This person should rather monitor the implementation of the plan, provide support, identify possible joint needs and opportunities and stimulate synergies.

Of course, as outlined in the previous sections, there are other important challenges to the implementation of an EDC-QA approach in South-eastern Europe. Problems related to education systems reforms, to accessibility of appropriate resources, lack of recognition for those with high achievements or lack of training, could be mentioned in this respect.

However, a number of significant opportunities should also be considered:

- The existence of educational reforms in progress, many of them having at core a trend towards an increased autonomy for schools;
- Important impact of previous projects, programmes and initiatives, either governmental or initiated by NGOs;
- Progress in democracy at society level, under the influence of the Council of Europe and of the EU, manifested, among others, through increased transparency of public institutions, introduction of systematic public consultation mechanisms, as well as civil society development associated with a tendency towards partnership with public structures;

Last, but not least, the process will be facilitated by the natural tendency for improvement and creativity and by the fact that, once began, teachers will feel its benefits for themselves and for their schools

Of course, the aim would be to establish functional QA systems with focus on EDC indicators in all the countries of the region. For this, the partnership of the ministries of education is fundamental. However, considering the difficulties of promoting changes at system level, even if they are “in the direction of the stream”, any initiative at school level to experiment EDC-QA and to integrate its principles should be strongly encouraged. Even if confronted with significant problems, such as lack of resources, the ministries can integrate EDC-QA into national strategies and plans, send a clear message to the controlling structures and provide support to such schools whenever possible.

It is also very important to

- identify, promote and encourage existing good practice
 - through existing communication mechanisms of the ministries;
 - through formal and informal networks (transnational and national);
- take a constructive approach even if the challenges are big (this approach contradicts the major stereotypes on SEE citizen): be aware of the obstacles but focus on assets and goals;
- adopt a step by step approach, do not expect over night impact, focus on ownership and provide adequate support in terms of recognition, encouragement, resources and training;
- pay special attention to diversity issues in general and particularly to cultural diversity issues, as this aspect is very important, yet sensitive across the region;
- consider the potential of the regional approach in promoting EDC-QA.

This report could not reflect all the issues and ideas expressed during the seminar. Besides the one presented above, some other interesting but controversial issues have also been brought in the discussions:

- the terminology debate (EDC / Human Rights Education, intercultural dimension, peace and conflict management)
- should we / can we evaluate EDC (and particularly attitudes)?
- functioning of existing structures, institutions and normative frameworks (e.g. the “new role of inspection”)
- debates around concepts such as education / instruction; knowledge / objectives / competencies
- mission of school in society / school - community / role of teacher

XIII. CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion of the seminar refers to the agreement of the participants that the EDC-QA approach and the Tool are valuable elements that can drive a real improvement in the practice of EDC in South-eastern Europe and that the authors of the Tool and the project team deserve congratulations for the quality of their work.

In order to become meaningful at national level, the Tool needs to be, not only translated and adapted, but also accompanied by support materials and training modules. These should be piloted in schools as soon as possible and integrated gradually into the educational policies of the region.

Fundraising for the next stage of the project should continue, based on:

- the quality of the already achieved results and their potential added value
- the consistency with common objectives of the Council of Europe and UNESCO
- the opportunity of the Council of Europe EDC Year and of the start of the UN HRE plan
- the political commitment initiated in the framework of the Stability Pact.

Ministries should become partners and support the next stage but additional funding external to the region is needed.

The seminar made a significant step towards the promotion of a shared understanding of EDC-QA at regional level and towards the establishment of a core group of a future regional support network.

Obviously, the EDC-QA approach represents a huge change compared to current practices and needs a medium/long term commitment. However, the moment to start the process is right and its initiation will trigger a much wider process of sustainable change in education systems with consequences at social level beyond schools.

Appendix 1 : Seminar programme

Thursday, 27 January 2005

16.00 Opening of the seminar

Chair : Myriam Karela, UNESCO

Introductions :

Presentation of seminar objectives, programme and participants : Myriam Karela, UNESCO

Presentation of the EDC-QA project : Michela Cecchini, EDC-QA project manager

Presentation of the context , objectives and outline of the EDC-QA Tool : Janez Krek, CEPS

17.00 Key note speech

Why quality assurance in education in Slovenia : policy perspectives

Slavko Gaber, former Minister of Education, Slovenia

19.00 Dinner

Friday, 28 January 2005

Chair : Myriam Karela, UNESCO

9.00 – 10.00 Presentation of the key contents of the EDC-QA Tool (panel)

9.00 – 9.10 EDC by Angela Garabagiu, Council of Europe

9.10 – 9.30 Quality assurance by Janez Krek

9.30 – 10.00 EDC-QA by Michela Cecchini

10.00 – 10.30 Coffee Break

10.30 – 12.30 Plenary discussion

10.30 – 11.00 Buzz groups³ in plenary

11.00 – 12.30 Discussion

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

Chair : Michela Cecchini

14.00 – 15.30 case studies : plenary presentations and discussions

14.00 – 14.45 Romania by Simona Velea, Institute for educational sciences, Bucarest

14.45 – 15.00 Slovenia by Janez Krek, CEPS

³ Small groups of 4-5 persons maximum, in plenary

15.30 – 16.00 Coffee Break

16.00 – 17.30 3 working groups on EDC-QA in schools

17.30 – 18.30 Overview of quality assurance in education in Europe

John MacBeath, UK

plenary presentation and discussion

19.30 Dinner

Saturday, 29 January 2005

9.00 – 10.30 3 working groups on EDC-QA at system level

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee Break

Chair : Michela Cecchini

11.00 – 12.30 Presentation and discussion of working group reports in plenary

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

Chair : Myriam Karela, UNESCO

14.00 – 14.30 Feedback contribution by John Macbeath, UK

14.30 – 17.30 Next steps

14.30 – 15.00 Regional buzz groups (professional profiles, eg school teachers and headteachers, ministries officials, inspectors, EDC coordinators, etc)

15.30 – 16.00 National buzz groups (country delegations)

16.00 – 16.30 Coffee Break

16.30 – 17.30 Plenary presentations and discussions

17.30 – 18.30 Conclusions by Calin Rus, general rapporteur

Closing of the seminar

19.30 Dinner

Appendix 2 : List of participants

Country	appellation	first name	last name	organisation	address	tel	email	fax
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